art and letters attached to it. It displayed little of the sparkle of real genius. There was, however, much of laborious ability.

Thanks to the internal order of Ch'ien Lung's reign, and to the heritage of prosperity which had come down from K'ang Hsi and Yung Cheng, the eighteenth century witnessed a rapid increase in wealth and population. More land was brought under cultivation and Chinese pushed into Southern Manchuria and into Eastern Inner Mongolia, including especially Jehol and Chahar. Cities grew in size, and the total number of inhabitants rose rapidly—quite likely, although the census figures are not trustworthy, to heights never before approached either in China or in any other Empire. By the end of the reign it had probably well exceeded the three hundred million mark.

With all this prosperity and outward show of power, by the time of Ch'ien Lung's demise the Ch'ing had passed its zenith. Although, until a few months before his death, Ch'ien Lung's health continued to be remarkably good for a man of his advanced years, toward the end much of the real power was in the hands of a trusted favorite, Ho Shen, a Manchu of humble origin. Ho Shen became the Emperor's chief minister, he amassed a fortune which would be considered huge even in the present wealthy Occident, his son was married to an imperial princess, and his proteges held high office. It was a state of affairs which a K'ang Hsi would never have tolerated. Corruption began to be rampant in the bureaucracy. As we have already noted, rebellions broke out. When Ch'ien Lung retired, the Miaotsu—some of the non-Chinese tribes—were in fresh revolt on the Hunan-Kweichow border and a serious uprising of the White Lotus Society was brewing.

No overwhelming disaster came immediately. Ch'ien Lung handed on his throne peacefully to a son, the title of whose reign was Chia Ch'ing. Soon after his father's death, Chia Ch'ing asserted himself against Ho Shen, confiscating the latter's fortune and permitting him to commit suicide (in commutation of sentence of death by execution). The revolts, too, which Chia Ch'ing inherited were suppressed. That of the White Lotus proved a prolonged affair and not until after 1800 was it finally crushed.

In ability Chia Ch'ing was far from being the equal of his father